

Deer Hunting Equipment

FIREARMS SEASON

Shotguns, handguns, rifles with pistol cartridges, muzzleloading long guns and muzzleloading handguns are legal during the firearms season. Hunters may carry more than one type of legal firearm when hunting during the firearms season only.

Shotguns

Shotguns must be 10, 12, 16, or 20-gauge or .410 bore loaded with slugs or sabot bullets.

- Rifled slug barrels are permitted.
- Combination rifle-shotguns are not allowed.

Handguns

Handguns, other than muzzleloading, must have a barrel at least 4 inches long and must fire a bullet of .243-inch diameter or larger. The handgun cartridge case, without the bullet, must be at least 1.16 inches long.

- Full metal-jacketed bullets are not permitted.
- Handguns are not permitted on any military areas.

Some types of handgun cartridges legal for deer hunting include:

.357 Magnum
.41 Magnum
.44 Magnum
.44 Special
.45 Colt
.45 Long Colt
.45 Winchester Magnum
.35 Remington
.357 Herrett.

Some illegal handgun cartridges for deer hunting are 38 Special, 38 Smith and Wesson, 38 Colt New Police, 38/200, 38 Long Colt, 38 Super, 38 ACP, 38 Colt Auto, 45 ACP, 45 Automatic and 45 Auto Rim. All 25/20, 32/20 and 30 carbine ammunition is prohibited also.

Rifles with pistol cartridges

Rifles must fire a cartridge with a bullet of .357-inch diameter or larger; have a minimum case length of 1.16 inches; and have a maximum case length of 1.625 inches.

- These rifle cartridges can be used only during the deer firearms season.

Some cartridges that are legal include the following:

.357 Magnum

.38-40 Winchester
.41 Magnum
.41 Special
.44 Magnum
.44 Special
.44-40 Winchester
.45 Colt
.454 Casull
.458 SOCOM
.480 Ruger
.475 Linebaugh
.50 Action Express
.500 S&W

Some illegal rifle cartridges for deer hunting are the .30-30 Winchester, .444 Marlin and .45-70 Govt.

Muzzleloaders

Muzzleloading firearms must be .44 caliber or larger loaded with a single bullet of at least .357 caliber.

- Saboted bullets are allowed, provided the bullet is .357 caliber or larger.
- Multiple-barrel muzzleloading long guns are allowed.

Muzzleloading handguns are allowed.

The muzzleloading handgun must be single shot, .50 caliber or larger, loaded with bullets at least .44 caliber and have a barrel at least 12 inches long, measured from the base of the breech plug excluding tangs and other projections, to the end of the barrel including the muzzle crown.

MUZZLELOADER SEASON

Only muzzleloading firearms are legal during the muzzleloader season.

- A muzzleloading firearm must be capable of being loaded from the muzzle, including both powder and bullet. Muzzleloading firearms must be .44 caliber or larger loaded with a single bullet of at least .357 caliber.
- Saboted bullets are allowed, provided the bullet is .357 caliber or larger.
- Multiple-barrel muzzleloading long guns are allowed.
- Muzzleloading handguns are allowed. The muzzleloading handgun must be single shot, .50 caliber or larger, loaded with bullets at least .44 caliber and have a barrel at least 12 inches long, measured from the base of the breech plug excluding tangs and other projections, to the end of the barrel including the muzzle crown.

ARCHERY SEASON

Legal archery equipment includes long bows, compound bows or recurve bows and arrows.

- The bow must have a pull of at least 35 pounds.

- Arrows must be tipped with broadheads that are metal, metal-edged, or napped flint, chert or obsidian.
- Poisoned or exploding arrows are illegal.
- Bows drawn, held or released by means other than by hand or hand-held releases may not be used. Draw-loc devices are illegal.
- No portion of the bow's riser or any track, trough, channel, arrow rest or other device that attaches to the bow's riser can guide the arrow from a point back beyond the bow's brace height.
- The common overdraw is still allowed as long as it does not extend beyond the string when the bow is relaxed.
- It is illegal to possess firearms while hunting deer with a bow and arrow, except for a handgun that is possessed under a personal protection permit.
- A bow may be possessed in the field before and after legal shooting hours only if the nock of the arrow is not placed on the bow string.

Crossbows (*Legal in Late Archery Deer Season only*)

Crossbows are legal hunting equipment during the late archery deer season only.

- Deer hunters may use crossbows to harvest deer of either sex only in the late archery season.
- Crossbows must have a minimum 125-pound pull and a mechanical safety.
- It is illegal to have an arrow placed on the crossbow string outside of legal deer hunting hours while in the field.

Carrying Firearms

It is legal to carry a handgun while hunting deer during the archery, firearm and muzzleloader seasons, as long as the handgun is possessed under a personal protection permit. It is not legal to take a deer with a handgun except during the firearms and muzzleloader seasons and in compliance with DNR regulations.